

SENATE BILL 228

By Lundberg

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38,
Chapter 7, Part 1, relative to autopsies.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 38-7-104, is amended by deleting subdivision (f)(3) and substituting instead the following:

(f)

(3) The county medical investigator may conduct investigations when a death is reported, as provided in § 38-7-108, under the supervision of the county medical examiner. The county medical investigator may make pronouncements of death and may recommend to the district attorney general with jurisdiction in the county that an autopsy be ordered. However, the county medical investigator is not empowered to sign a death certificate. The district attorney may delegate to the county medical investigator the authority to order an autopsy.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 38-7-106, is amended by deleting subsection (a) and substituting instead the following:

The district attorney general with jurisdiction in a county may order the county medical examiner to perform an autopsy on the body of any person in a case involving a homicide; suspected homicide; a suicide; a violent, unnatural, or suspicious death; an unexpected apparent natural death in an adult; sudden, unexpected infant and child deaths; deaths believed to represent a threat to public health or safety; and executed prisoners. When the district attorney general decides to order an autopsy, the district attorney general shall notify the county medical examiner and the chief medical examiner. The district attorney general shall notify the next of kin about the impending

autopsy if the next of kin is known or reasonably ascertainable. The sheriff or other law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction shall serve process containing such notice and return such process within twenty-four (24) hours.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.